

# Six Trait Writing Warm-ups

## Trait #1: Ideas

Preparation	Exercise	Follow-Up
1. Write on the board: "Why I Don't Have My Homework"	List a few possible reasons students could come up with for not having homework in on time. Have students add to the list. Encourage "imaginative" reasons.	Talk about the way imaginative ideas make a topic more "fun".
2. Read aloud Joan Walsh Anglund's "A Friend is Someone Who Likes You"	Have students list all the different kinds of friends they have or can think of (older, younger, pets, toys, etc.). Talk about the qualities that make a friend.	Save the lists in their writing folders

## Trait #2: Organization

Preparation	Exercise	Follow-Up
1. Judith Viorst's "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day".	Read aloud. Ask students what kind of order this was written in. Ask why they think it was written this way. Ask if it would be as assuming written in another way. Discuss why or why not.	Talk about the importance of order in organizing writing.
2. Several trade books with good beginnings.	Read the beginnings of a few books. Discuss why they think they are or are not good beginnings. Would they want to continue reading? Why or why not?	Talk about the importance of a good ending.

## Trait #3: Voice

Preparation	Exercise	Follow-Up
1. Display a variety of greeting cards.	Have students compare the cards – what makes them different? Ask why different types of cards are appropriate for different occasions or different people; for a good friend's birthday, for a holiday or a death.	Talk about the need for different voices for different occasions.
2. Two brief selections from age directed writing – a young child's book & an adult novel.	Read a bit of each and ask what the difference is and how you can tell which is meant for which.	Point out the need for different voices for different audiences.

## Trait #4: Word Choice

Preparation	Exercise	Follow-Up
1. Write "loud" words – KABOOM! CRASH! ROARING, THUNDERING, EAR-SPLITTING	Ask students for other "loud" words to add. Have students write down the five "quietest" or "softest" words they can think of. Have them share these words and list them on the board.	Talk about how words can convey the sound of things.
2. Write the word "walking".	Ask students to help you make a list of all the ways someone or something could be walking (marching, scuffling, stomping, dawdling, etc.) Now add adjectives (hurriedly, leisurely, angrily, etc.) Compare these verb/adverb combinations with the simple word "walking". Is there a difference in what you "see"?	Talk about how specific words can give you a clearer picture of what's happening.

<b>Trait #5: Sentence Fluency</b>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Follow-Up</b>
1. A few limericks	Read the limericks aloud. Ask what makes them fun to listen to and read.	Talk about how writing can “flow” easily.
2. Display a selection full of short (3 and 4 word) sentences – We came home. We ate cookies. We played games...etc.	Write on the board “After school, we rode our bikes home and shared a plate of homemade chocolate chip cookies. Then we decided to play a quick game of Chinese Checkers followed by our favorite, Monopoly.” Ask students which sounds better and why.	Talk about ways to makes sentences flow better.

Permission is granted by Ruth Culham for reproduction by schools for classroom use only